

## **Northern Area Chairman Report to 2004 Annual National Conference**

The post of Area Chairman became available at the November Conference as my predecessor was standing down due to work commitments. I had just completed three terms as Leeds Group Chairman and thought it would be an ideal opportunity to try my hand at the post for a short term (November to May) as a learning experience, perhaps I'd stand in May for the full year.

It was reported at the Conference that the Area was in debt, all but one of the Groups in the North-West of the Area were struggling, the Area Administrator and Activities Officer had also previously resigned and the Area Treasurer was seriously ill. The "Top Table" was occupied only by the Area Chairman.

I wondered what I'd let myself in for!

### **So what about 2003?**

At the May Conference a Chairman, Administrator, Treasurer, Activities Officer and Yorkshire Region Co-ordinator were elected.

The Conference was quite positive with Groups committing to various Area scale activities.

The e-mail newsletter "e-chat" saw its last issue in January; this was re-introduced following the November Conference. The Area magazine, "Northern Lights" also saw its last issue in the summer; hopefully this will return in 2004.

Area events included a Board Game Challenge, Valentines Disco, Pre-ANC Forum, Spring Ball and Christmas Disco. 2003 saw the introduction of the National Narrow boat Holiday.

Area scale Group events were also organized including Leeds Group's Video Horse Racing, Bradford Group's Treasure Hunt and Rothwell Group's Bunk Barn Holiday and Halloween Disco.

Only one event was cancelled, a Pitch & Putt competition which was re-scheduled by the Yorkshire Region Co-ordinator at short notice.

Sadly Stockport Upper Tier Group closed in November.

### **Since my election**

The main thing I've been doing is organizing and overseeing Area activities including the Christmas Disco and for 2004 the Leeds & Manchester Nights Out, a Badminton Competition, the Valentines Disco, a Ten Pin Bowling Competition, the Halloween and the Christmas Discos.

I have also started to visit all the Groups in the Area and by the time this report is published I will have completed my first visit to each Group. I've been greeted warmly and positively by everyone.

A new Area Administrator has been co-opted.

My first NEC meeting was a very positive one, there is a great commitment to change and improve 18 Plus, hopefully this will be the same for the Northern Area.

**John A Smith**  
**Chairman – Northern Area**